

February 23, 2004

Mr. Gary Ostrom
Land Rights Supervisor
Great River Energy
17845 East Highway 10
P.O. Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330-0800

Re: Local Review of Henrietta Township Substation
and Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Ostrom:

This letter confirms that the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board has received notification that Itasca-Mantrap Cooperative Electric Association and Great River Energy have applied to Henrietta Township in Hubbard County for a building permit to construct a 115/34.5 kV substation and ½-mile of double circuit 115 kV transmission line. The project seeks to insure reliable electrical load serving capabilities in the Itasca-Mantrap and Minnesota Power service territories, particularly during peak load conditions and outages on the existing transmission grid.

Under the Power Plant Siting Act, Minnesota Statutes § 116C.51-.69, a permit from the Environmental Quality Board is generally required for transmission line projects over 100 kV. However, for certain projects under 200 kV, a utility may elect to seek approval from those local units of government that have jurisdiction over the route instead of applying to the EQB. The proposed 115 kV substation and transmission line project is eligible for local review. [Minn. Stat. § 116C.576 and Minn. R. part 4400.5000 subp. 2 C and 2 D]

You have indicated that Henrietta Township is the Responsible Government Unit with local jurisdiction over the project. The township may relinquish its jurisdiction by requesting the EQB to assume jurisdiction within 60 days of the filing of an application with the local unit of government.

There are certain procedural steps that the local units of government must follow as part of the permitting process. These steps are described in the EQB rules, Minnesota Rules part 4400.5000. In addition to notifying the EQB, the applicant must also notify those persons

on the general notification list maintained by the EQB. According to your correspondence, you have already properly noticed those persons on the EQB general notification list that a permit has been applied for from the local unit of government.

In addition, an environmental assessment must be prepared by the responsible government unit. Specific requirements with regard to the environmental review process include an opportunity for the public to participate in the development of the scope of the environmental assessment before it is prepared, notification in the *EQB Monitor* of when the assessment is available for review and of the procedure for commenting on the assessment, and providing a copy of the assessment to the EQB. The final governmental decision on the project cannot be made until at least ten days after the notice appears in the *EQB Monitor*. [Minn. R. 4400.5000 subp. 5]

Thank you for notification about the intent to seek local approval of this project. I look forward to receiving the environmental assessment in the near future. If you have any questions about any of this, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

David Birkholz
MN Environmental Quality Board
300 Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
(P) 651-296-2878
(F) 651-296-3698
(E) david.birkholz@state.mn.us

cc: Alan Winterberger, Henrietta Township
Ken Tretbar, Itasca-Mantrap CEA